

Bush between concourses A and B for the opening of what was then the Houston International Airport in 1969. Merle poured concrete all over Houston, including the original Interstate 10. He came across a job with the Marriott Corporation, where he really got to focus on his construction and maintenance certifications. He took computer classes at Lone Star College—Kingwood, eventually earning the top HVAC license. When Marriott wanted to promote Merle and send him to Cincinnati, his family had already considered Humble home. He then quickly put that mechanical education to use and decided to start his own company. In 1978, family-owned and operated Aaron Mechanical opened.

Aaron Mechanical had water bill and permitting issues with the City of Humble. Rather than battling with the city, Merle ran for Humble City Council to help come up with solutions. In 2005, he turned over Aaron Mechanical to the experienced hands of his son. This gave him the opportunity to run for Humble City Council and eventually, mayor for the City of Humble. As mayor, Merle has placed a significant importance in infrastructure. He focused efforts into public safety by improving roads and drainage.

Merle has many times been described as “having a servant’s heart”, and that held true during the devastation of Hurricane Harvey. He worked tirelessly trying to fulfill the needs of the people of Humble, opening up the Humble Civic Center as a shelter, talking with people who lost everything, hugging and crying with them. Merle worked aggressively to have contractors ready as quickly as possible to begin the debris removal process.

The Lake Houston Chamber of Commerce has been selecting a Citizen of the Year since 1969, recognizing those who show selfless public service and sacrifice. It was no question that Merle most deserved to win the Haden E. McKay, MD Citizen of the Year for 2017. But if you ask him, he would tell you, “All the first responders and volunteers who went into the flooded areas of Humble to help people affected by Hurricane Harvey. These are our citizens of the year.”

The City of Humble is important to the Aaron Family. Merle and Linda have three children, eight grandchildren, and 14 great grandchildren, who all have or are currently going through Humble ISD schools. For 55 years, their place of worship has been First Baptist Church of Humble. The Aaron family has deep roots in Humble, Texas. Always giving back to the place they call home.

And that’s just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY BATISTA

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I want to honor Nancy Batista as a distinguished leader in Central Florida for Hispanic Heritage Month. Nancy Batista is a Guatemalan immigrant who came to the U.S. at a very young age. She is the Florida State Director of Mi Familia Vota. Nancy was raised in a single parent home, she understands the sacrifices her mother had to make as she worked three shifts in different factories to sustain the family.

Growing up, her family experienced many hurdles due to their immigration status. Now she uses those experiences as a driver.

Nancy is a wife and mother of two kids, Anthony and Natalie; they are her biggest inspiration.

She obtained her Master’s degree in Business Administration dual concentration in Human Resources and Project management with a scholarship from Herzing University and her Bachelor’s degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Central Florida.

She is thrilled to be a part of the Mi Familia Vota team. She hopes to be an advocate and voice for those who are oppressed.

Under her leadership as Florida State Director, she has led her team to register over 27,000 people to vote this year alone and they are working hard to register 30,000 people by October 9th.

Mi Familia Vota is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization, it is their mission to build Latino political power. This year, Mi Familia Vota partnered with the League of Woman Voters to help translate a Voter Guide for Orange county.

Nancy is focused on partnering with other organizations that share the same values and agendas to help promote unity in our communities.

She believes that our communities will greatly benefit from being continuously involved in our government and election processes and she ensures that Mi Familia Vota will be supportive through civic engagement participation.

RECOGNIZING FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY’S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 60th anniversary of Florida Institute of Technology (“Florida Tech”). Dr. Jerome P. Keuper founded this private, non-profit university as a “night school for missilemen,” allowing workers at Cape Canaveral to pursue graduate education. Initially named “Brevard Engineering College,” Florida Tech held its first classes on September 22, 1958.

Since its humble beginnings, Florida Tech has soared to great heights. The university now serves nearly 10,000 students through its Melbourne campus, its extended study sites across the nation, and its online facilities.

Boasting more than 60,000 alumni around the world, Florida Tech has earned a spot in U.S. News & World Report as the number one national university in attractiveness to international students. This is the fourth year in a row that Florida Tech has been recognized for its diverse student body.

Florida Tech has also been recognized for the remarkable leadership of President T. Dwayne McCay and First Lady Mary Helen McCay. This past November, the couple was inducted into the Florida Inventors Hall of Fame in honor of the 15 joint patents they hold in the field of metallurgical engineering.

Mayors Kathleen Meehan of Melbourne and Hal Rose of West Melbourne have testified to

the significant educational and cultural contributions that Florida Tech has made to the region, the state, the nation, as well as the globe. Through “the university’s core values of research to benefit all humankind; student success for a lifetime; and good global citizenship,” Florida Tech has raised the bar for every institution of higher education.

Last month marked 60 years since the founding of the university that began its life as “countdown college.” Mayor William Capote of Palm Bay delivered remarks at the anniversary celebration, and, in a fitting touch, Florida Tech commemorated its achievement by launching fireworks into the sky, reminding many graduates of the rockets and satellites they have helped launch beyond Earth’s atmosphere.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Florida Tech, as well as its faculty, staff, students, and graduates. Please rise in honor of the university’s 60 years of educating excellence.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT LOCOMOTIVE CHASE FESTIVAL IN THE CITY OF ADAIRSVILLE, GEORGIA

HON. BARRY LOUDERMILK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Great Locomotive Chase Festival in the city of Adairsville, Georgia.

In 1968, Marion Lacey, principal of Adairsville High School wanted to host a Festival in the fall for students and members of the community to come together. Two years later, the festival was moved to the downtown Adairsville area, and was renamed the Great Locomotive Chase Festival to commemorate the event during the Civil War when “the Texas” pursued “the General” for eighty-seven miles, passing through the city of Adairsville.

This longstanding Adairsville tradition is the 2nd oldest festival in the state of Georgia, and hosts over 30,000 people during the three-day event. The parade, pageants, live entertainment, rides, a wide selection of southern fare, and fireworks, offers something for every member of the community. The 50th anniversary GLCF will be held this year on October 5–7.

On behalf of Georgia’s 11th Congressional District, I recognize the City of Adairsville, the Mayor, and the City Council on this 50th anniversary of the Great Locomotive Chase Festival.

IN HONOR OF M.B. SMILEY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1968

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the vibrant history and spirit of M.B. Smiley High School Class of ‘68 as